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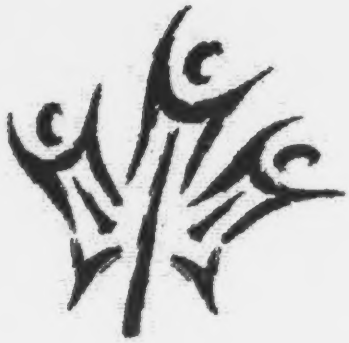
# Article

## Giving and volunteering among Canada's immigrants

*by Derrick Thomas*



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| | |
|---|---|
| . | not available for any reference period |
| .. | not available for a specific reference period |
| ... | not applicable |
| 0 | true zero or a value rounded to zero |
| $0^s$ | value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded |
| $^p$ | preliminary |
| $^r$ | revised |
| x | suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act* |
| $^E$ | use with caution |
| F | too unreliable to be published |

# Giving and volunteering among Canada's immigrants

*by Derrick Thomas*

**Introduction**

Immigrants make up a growing proportion of the Canadian population, especially in major cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal. Almost 1 in 5 Canadians is now an immigrant. They come from a range of experiences and traditions and may vary in their attitudes toward formal volunteering and giving, and in their concept of charity.[1]

While immigrants come to Canada from various places and for different reasons, they arrive in an evolving country. Newcomers differ widely from each other and encounter a variety of conditions depending on when and where they arrive in Canada. The characteristics of different immigrant cohorts may account for variations in their propensity to give and volunteer, as well as in the amounts they donate and the causes they support.

Immigrants who have been in Canada for many decades might resemble the Canadian-born more than recent immigrants, who may face constraints on their generosity. New arrivals have often used up their savings in the migration process, are faced with setting up new households and take some time to adjust to the Canadian labour market. Their time and financial resources might be more limited than those of other Canadians.

This article examines donating and volunteering among immigrants in Canada: their reasons for doing so or not, the amounts of money and time they give, and the types of organizations which benefit from their largesse. This information may be valuable to charitable and non-profit organizations that are attempting to reach out to immigrant and cultural minorities and to appeal to them in a culturally sensitive way.

As well as comparing charitable behaviours and attitudes of immigrants and the Canadian-born, the article examines whether volunteering and giving can be considered indicators of immigrant integration and adjustment (as suggested by some authors).[2] According to this perspective, some newcomers may, at least initially, primarily rely on and give to their own community organizations.[3] However as time passes and new Canadians connect more widely with community groups and civic organizations, their patterns of giving time and money may change to include broader causes. To what extent do recent immigrants differ from long-term immigrants in terms of their giving and volunteering behaviours?

The first part of this article presents information on immigrants' charitable donations and the second examines how volunteering behaviours differ between immigrants and the Canadian-born.

**Immigrant donors give more on average than Canadian-born donors**

A great majority of Canadians donate at least some money toward charities and non-profit organizations each year (84% in both 2010 and 2007). In 2010, immigrants were about as likely to donate money as were people born in Canada (Table 1).

Immigrants who donated, however, contributed more money on average: in 2010, they gave an average of $554, compared with $409 for the Canadian-born. The median amount given by immigrant donors was also higher ($155 versus $111 for the Canadian-born). This pattern of donating among immigrants is consistent with that found in 2007.[4]

Religious affiliation and attendance are among the factors that may explain the larger charitable donations given by immigrants compared with the Canadian-born. In 2010, immigrants were twice as likely as the Canadian-born to say they attended religious meetings or services weekly (28% versus 14%). People who attend religious services weekly donate at higher rates and donate more[5] and this holds true for immigrants. In 2010, about 89% of immigrants who attended religious services weekly were charitable donors, compared with 73% of immigrants who never attended services. While religiously active immigrants gave an average of $821,

## What you should know about this study

The primary data source for this article is the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP), carried out in 2010. This survey follows a 2007 survey that used essentially the same questionnaire and methodology. In some instances, comparisons will be made between the 2010 and 2007 data.[1]

The 2010 CSGVP asked a sample of approximately 15,500 Canadians about their charitable and volunteer behaviour, of which just over 1,700 indicated they were immigrants. Over 1,000 respondents (1,084) did not answer the immigration question and are necessarily excluded from this analysis. The remaining sample consisted of about 14,400 respondents.

Survey respondents were asked about their charitable donations over the previous 12 months, the amounts and recipient organizations involved, the promotion methods through which the giving occurred, and their reasons for giving or not giving. Similar questions were asked about volunteering.

In order to compare the amounts donated in 2010 to those donated in 2007, the amounts for 2007 were adjusted using the Consumer Price Index to account for inflation.

**Definitions**

**Immigrant:** For the purposes of this article, an immigrant is someone who is or has been at some point a landed immigrant.

The survey asked "Are you now, or have you ever been a landed immigrant to Canada?" The response categories were "Yes" and "No". The question was asked of all respondents who had indicated that they had not been born in Canada.

The term "immigrant" excludes temporary residents—people in Canada on a time-limited permit to work, study or visit. Similarly, it does not include refugee claimants whose claims have not yet been accepted by the Canadian government. Also excluded are people born abroad who may have been Canadian citizens at birth (e.g. people born to parents in the Canadian military or foreign service who were posted abroad). Together these groups make up less than 1% of the Canadian population.

**Arrival cohorts/time in Canada:** Immigrants are grouped according to the number of years they have been in Canada since their reported year of arrival. "Recent" immigrants are those who had been in Canada less than 10 years at the time of the survey; "long-term" immigrants are those who had been in Canada 30 years or more.

1. Similar surveys were also conducted in 2000 and 1997. As they differed somewhat in methodology from the more recent surveys, their data are not directly comparable.

those who never attended services gave $313 (Table 3).

Among people who attended religious services weekly, immigrants contributed on average about $250 less than the Canadian-born ($821 versus $1,077). However, the average amount donated by all immigrants was higher than that donated by all Canadian-born because immigrants are more likely to be religiously active.

### Even at lower levels of household income, immigrants give more

Household income is another important predictor of the average amount given to charitable and non-profit organizations. Immigrants tend to have lower household incomes than the Canadian-born (Table 2). However, at equivalent levels of household income, immigrant donors tended to donate more than Canadian-born donors. For example, immigrants with annual household incomes of less than $40,000 gave an average of $404 to charitable and non-profit organizations, compared with $214 for their Canadian-born counterparts (Table 3).

The same was true for higher income donors. In 2010, immigrants with an annual household income of $100,000 or more gave about $250 more, on average, than Canadian-born donors at that income level ($849 versus $593). Moreover, immigrants as a whole donated a larger percentage of their household income. They gave 1% on average, while Canadian-born donors gave about 0.7% of their pre-tax household income.

### Immigrant donors more likely to give to religious organizations and to give them larger amounts

While immigrants give to many of the same causes and organizations as people born in Canada, there are also important differences between the two groups. Immigrant donors were more likely to contribute to religious organizations and charities (50% versus 36%). In contrast, they were less likely than Canadian-born donors to donate to non-religious organizations (73% to 82%) (Chart 1).

**Table 1 Donor rate and average and median annual donations, by immigrant status and time immigrants spent in Canada, population aged 15 and over, 2007 and 2010**

| | 2010 | | | 2007 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Donor rate | Average annual donation[1] | Median annual donation[1] | Donor rate | Average annual donation[1] | Median annual donation[1] |
| | percentage | dollars | | percentage | dollars | |
| **Immigrant status** | | | | | | |
| Canadian-born † | 85 | 409 | 111 | 85 | 442 | 116 |
| Immigrants | 82 | 554* | 155 * | 82 | 531* | 150* |
| **Time immigrants spent in Canada** | | | | | | |
| Less than 10 years | 79 | 270[E]* | 90 * | 71* | 293* | 73* |
| 10 to 19 years | 79 | 482 | 138 * | 84 | 485 | 146* |
| 20 to 29 years | 84 | 666[E]* | 160 * | 81 | 664* | 251* |
| 30 years or more | 90* | 752* | 270 * | 90* | 650* | 238* |

† reference group
* statistically significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$) from the reference group
1. Estimates of average and median annual donations are calculated for donors only.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

**Table 2 Selected personal and economic characteristics, by immigrant status and time immigrants spent in Canada, population aged 15 and over, 2010**

| | | Immigrants | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Time in Canada | | | |
| | Canadian-born † | Total | Less than 10 years | 10 to 19 years | 20 to 29 years | 30 years or more |
| **Personal and economic characteristics** | | | | | | |
| Average age (years) | 45 | 46* | 32* | 40* | 46 | 62* |
| Speaks a non-official language most often at home (percentage) | 1[E] | 44* | 63* | 57* | 45* | 19* |
| Average annual household income (dollars) | 81,602 | 75,563* | 69,349* | 82,731 | 80,635 | 75,469 |
| Attends a religious service at least once a year (percentage) | 45 | 57* | 63* | 63* | 56* | 50 |
| Has a university degree (percentage) | 21 | 39* | 41* | 47* | 39* | 33* |
| Married or common-law (percentage) | 63 | 67* | 60 | 72* | 72* | 70* |
| At least one child under age 18 in household (percentage) | 37 | 44* | 66* | 52* | 46 | 19* |
| Average household size (number of people) | 3.0 | 3.2* | 3.9* | 3.6* | 3.2* | 2.5* |

† reference group
* statistically significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$) from the reference group
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

**Table 3 Donor rates and average annual donations, by immigrant status and personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, 2010**

| | Distribution of population aged 15 and over | | Donor rate | | Average annual donation[1] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Canadian-born † | Immigrants | Canadian-born † | Immigrants | Canadian-born † | Immigrants |
| | percentage | | | | dollars | |
| **Personal and economic characteristics** | | | | | | |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **85** | **82** | **409** | **554** |
| **Age group** | | | | | | |
| 15 to 24 years | 17 | 12* | 71 | 74 | 114 | F |
| 25 to 34 years | 17 | 17 | 82 | 71 | 293 | 382[E] |
| 35 to 64 years | 51 | 53 | 89 | 86 | 472 | 610* |
| 65 years and over | 15 | 18* | 88 | 87 | 582 | 678 |
| **Language spoken most often at home** | | | | | | |
| English and/or French | 99 | 56* | 85 | 87 | 412 | 629* |
| Other language | 1 | 44* | 78 | 76 | 154[E] | 442* |
| **Household income** | | | | | | |
| Under $40,000 | 25 | 26 | 78 | 73 | 214 | 404[E]* |
| $40,000 to $99,999 | 43 | 47 | 86 | 84 | 375 | 452 |
| $100,000 and over | 31 | 27* | 89 | 87 | 793 | 849* |
| **Religion** | | | | | | |
| No religion | 26 | 21* | 75 | 79 | 314 | 418 |
| Does not attend religious services | 29 | 22* | 82 | 73* | 230 | 313[E] |
| Infrequent attendance[2] | 32 | 29 | 91 | 84* | 327 | 531[E]* |
| Weekly attendance | 14 | 28* | 94 | 89 | 1,077 | 821* |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| No university degree | 79 | 61* | 82 | 81 | 326 | 393 |
| University degree | 21 | 39* | 94 | 85* | 684 | 796 |
| **Marital status** | | | | | | |
| Not in a couple | 37 | 33* | 77 | 78 | 293 | 524[E]* |
| Married or common-law | 63 | 67* | 90 | 84* | 468 | 567 |
| **Presence of children in household** | | | | | | |
| No children under age 18 | 63 | 56* | 85 | 82 | 443 | 606* |
| Children under age 18 | 37 | 44* | 85 | 83 | 353 | 488* |
| **Labour force status** | | | | | | |
| Unemployed or not in the labour force | 33 | 35 | 78 | 76 | 328 | 427 |
| Employed | 67 | 65 | 88 | 86 | 422 | 597* |

† reference group
* statistically significant difference ($\alpha=0.05$) from the reference group
1. Estimates of average annual donations are calculated for donors only.
2. Includes the following responses: "attends at least once or twice a year", "at least 3 or 4 times a year" or "at least once a month".
Note: Due to rounding, totals may not add to 100%.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

In 2010, one-half of all the money immigrants donated to charitable or non-profit organizations went to religious organizations. The corresponding proportion for the Canadian-born was 37% (Chart 2).

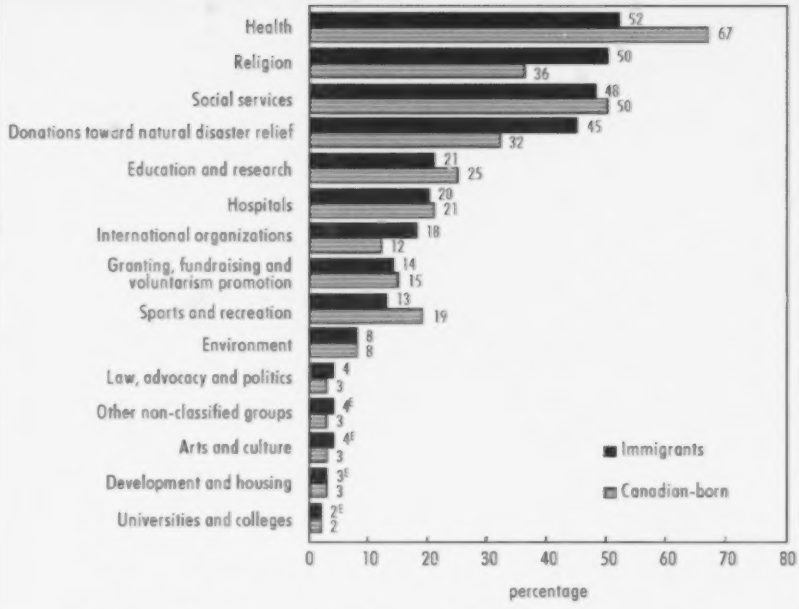
While many Canadian-born donors gave to health-related organizations, immigrant donors were less likely to do so. Immigrants were also less likely to give to social services organizations and to those involved in sports and recreation. However, they more often contributed to international organizations (Chart 1).

### Long-term immigrants are more likely to give than recent immigrants

Data from previous surveys[6] have consistently shown that, among immigrants, those who have been in Canada longer are more likely to donate and the average annual amount they give is larger. The most recent results reconfirm this trend: in 2010, the likelihood of giving money to charitable or non-profit organizations was higher for long-term immigrants who had been in Canada for 30 years or more (90%), than for recent immigrants in Canada less than 10 years (79%). Also, long-term immigrant donors tended to give a larger average annual donation ($752) than both recent immigrants ($270) and the Canadian-born ($409) (Table 1).

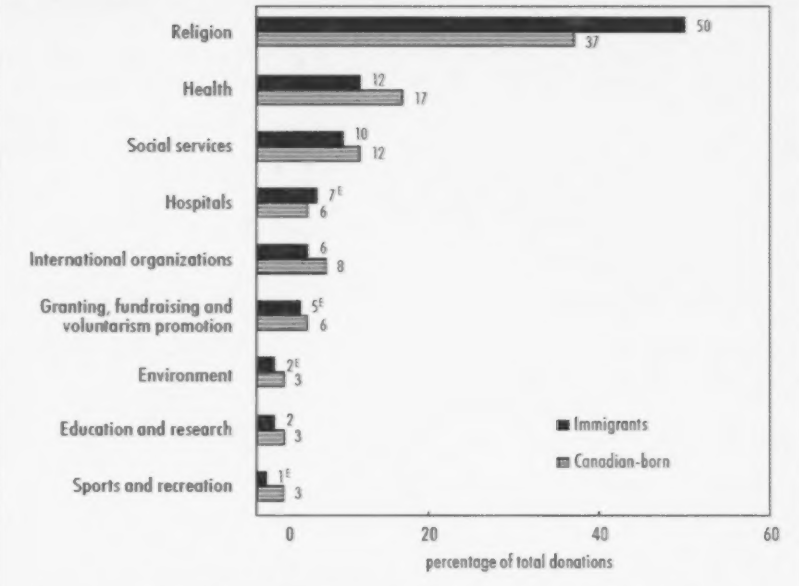
According to some commentators, immigrants gradually expand their concept of community as they adjust to life in a new country.[7] From this perspective, recent immigrants will first focus on resettling their own immediate family, which implies making fewer charitable donations. Once they have more resources, many will give to causes in their country of birth or to their own cultural group; they may also donate to immigrant groups more generally. Eventually, this thesis suggests, immigrants come to feel part of the broader host community and donate and give their time much as do other citizens.[8]

**Chart 1 Donor rate for different types of charitable and non-profit organizations, by immigrant status, donors aged 15 and over, 2010**




Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

**Chart 2 Percentage of total amount of donations given to different types of organizations, by immigrant status, donors aged 15 and over, 2010**




Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

However, other authors suggest that immigrants adjust in many different ways the longer they live in this country: they grow older, may acquire greater facility in Canada's official languages, often improve their employment situation, and increase their household income and wealth. Differences in giving and volunteering may be attributable to differences in one or more of these dimensions and not to social integration or any convergence in values over time.[9]

**Recent immigrants give less on average, in part because they are younger and have lower household incomes**

Recent immigrants are younger than the Canadian-born (their average ages are 32 years and 45 years, respectively). Long-term immigrants in Canada 30 years or more are, not surprisingly, older on average, at 62 years. Among the Canadian population as a whole as well as among immigrants, age is strongly and positively correlated with the likelihood of donating to charity and, even more so, with the amount given (Table 2).[10]

Because recent immigrants are younger on average than long-term immigrants and the Canadian-born, it is useful to compare only the people in these groups who are less than 45 years old. Overall, the Canadian-born gave 1.5 times more on average than recent immigrants ($409 versus $270). However, controlling for age changes this quite a bit: among people aged less than 45, recently arrived immigrants gave about the same average amount as the Canadian-born—around $275.

Very few long-term immigrants are younger than 45 years old. In fact, 47% of them are aged 65 or more, compared with 15% of the Canadian-born and less than 1% of recent immigrant. These different age profiles help explain why long-term immigrants gave more, on average, than recent immigrants or the Canadian-born.

In addition to being younger, recent immigrants tend to have lower household incomes, a fact that also helps explain why they give less money on average to charitable causes. Among people whose household income was less than $40,000, recent immigrants were as likely to give as long-term immigrants and the Canadian-born. At this income level, recent immigrants also gave the same average annual amount as the Canadian-born.

Most immigrants improve their ability to understand and communicate in Canada's official languages the longer they live in this country. With time, they become more likely to speak English or French at home. About 76% of immigrants who spoke a language other than English or French at home gave money to a charity or non-profit organization, compared with 87% of those who spoke an official language at home. The latter also gave more on average ($629 versus $442) (Table 2).

A regression analysis confirmed that, in terms of average amounts donated, the difference between recent or long-term immigrants and the Canadian-born was explained by the composition of the populations in terms of age, household income, language used at home and religious attendance (results not shown).

**Long-term immigrants give a smaller share of their donations to religious organizations**

The likelihood that immigrant donors will give to religious organizations does not change significantly the longer they live in Canada. Long-term immigrants did, however, give a higher average annual donation to religious organizations than more recent immigrants, possibly as a consequence of their resources increasing with time.

However, long-term immigrants gave a smaller percentage of their total annual donations to religious organizations (49% versus 55% for recent immigrants) and larger percentages to some other types of organizations. The percentage of donations given to social services was 11% for long-term immigrants compared with 4% for recent immigrants; the proportion was 14% and 8% respectively for donations to health-related causes. These results suggest, at least to some degree, that immigrants diversify the types of charities and non-profit organizations they support the longer they are in Canada.

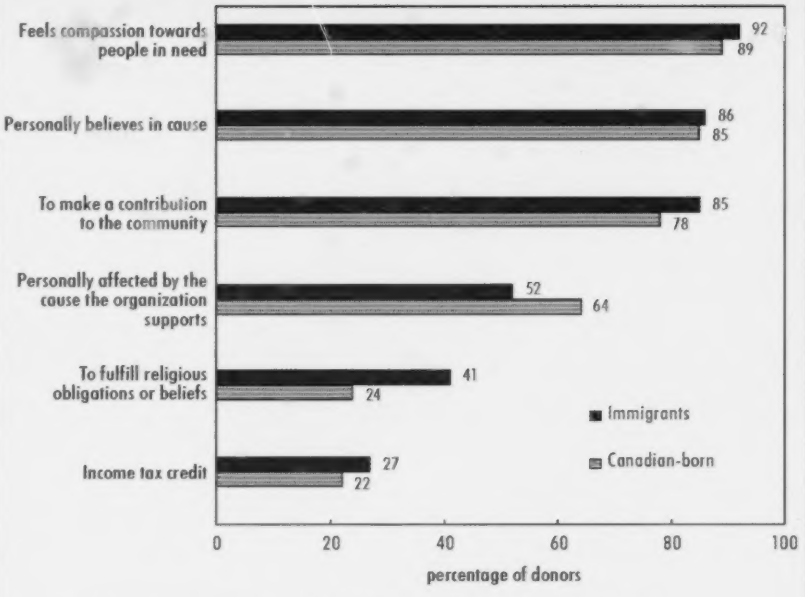
**Same top three reasons for giving among immigrant and Canadian-born donors**

Immigrant donors are motivated by the same top three reasons for giving as other Canadian donors: compassion for those in need, personal belief in the cause of the organization and a desire to contribute to the community. In 2010, immigrant donors were slightly more likely than those born in Canada to mention compassion for those in need (92% versus 89%) and a desire to contribute to the community (85% versus 78%) as reasons for giving money to a charity or non-profit organization. However, they were less likely to mention being personally affected or knowing someone affected by the cause that the organization supported (52% versus 64% of Canadian-born donors) (Chart 3).

As one might expect given the types of organizations to which they gave, immigrant donors were more often motivated by their religious beliefs or obligations (41% versus 24% for Canadian-born donors). They were also more likely to mention a tax credit as their reason for giving to charities (27% versus 22% of Canadian-born donors).

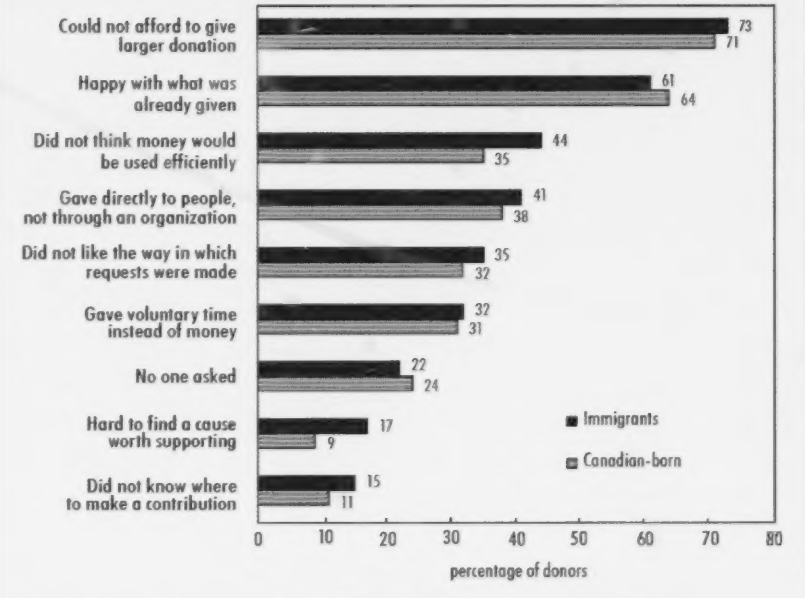
Immigrant donors gave a number of reasons for not donating more to charity. As with Canadian-born donors, they most frequently said they had given all they could afford or that they were content with the amount they had already donated. Immigrant donors were more

**Chart 3 Reasons for making financial donations, by immigrant status, donors aged 15 and over, 2010**




Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

**Chart 4 Reasons for not making more financial donations, by immigrant status, donors aged 15 and over, 2010**




Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

sceptical, though, that the money they gave would be used efficiently (44% versus 35% of the Canadian-born donors) (Chart 4).

In 2010, 17% of immigrant donors did not give more because they had difficulty finding a cause worth supporting or somewhere to give—practically twice the proportion of Canadian-born donors (9%). This may reflect a lack of familiarity with the non-profit sector in Canada, language problems or isolation among some immigrants. Perhaps some charities or non-profits find it more difficult to reach out to immigrants than to the Canadian-born. Social barriers or bounded social networks[11] may also limit the philanthropic behaviour of immigrants or confine it within their own religious community.[12]

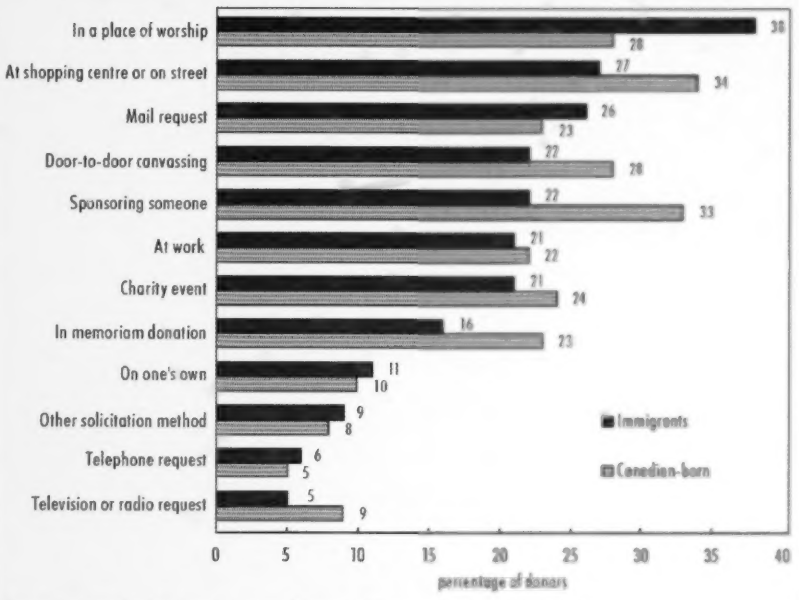
### Immigrants more often give through a collection at their place of worship

In keeping with their religious motivations for donating and the larger amounts they give, 38% of immigrant donors said they gave through a collection at their place of worship, compared with 28% of Canadian-born donors. In contrast, immigrants were less likely than people born in Canada to have given on the street or at a shopping centre, or in response to a door-to-door canvasser (Chart 5).

Sponsoring someone in an event was commonly mentioned as a method of giving by the Canadian-born (33%), but less often cited by immigrants (22%). Immigrants were also less likely to have made a donation in memory of someone or in the context of a charity event or television appeal.

Immigrant donors were somewhat less likely to donate food than those born in Canada (55% compared to 64%) and just as likely to donate clothing, toys or other items in kind.

**Chart 5 Solicitation methods or ways of giving, by immigrant status, donors aged 15 and over, 2010**




Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

### Immigrants less likely to volunteer than the Canadian-born

The voluntary activities of Canadians benefit not only charitable organizations and their clients but also the volunteers themselves. For example, volunteers make contacts, develop skills and gain experience that can help them socially and economically. For immigrants however, the same deficiencies in language ability, Canadian experience and social networks that may impede their access to the job market[13] can also represent barriers to volunteering. Nonetheless, volunteer work is perhaps more easily obtained than paid work and may be of particular help in the social and economic integration of immigrants.

In 2010, immigrants were not as likely as people born in Canada to volunteer with a charitable or nonprofit organization. Specifically, 39% of immigrants did some volunteer work during the course of the year, compared with 49% of the Canadian-born. While immigrants were less likely to volunteer, those who did so contributed about the same number of hours in 2010 as the Canadian-born (Table 4).

**Table 4 Volunteer rates and average and median annual hours volunteered, by immigrant status and time immigrants spent in Canada, population aged 15 and over, 2007 and 2010**

| | 2010 | | | 2007 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Volunteer rate | Average annual volunteer hours[1] | Median annual volunteer hours[1] | Volunteer rate | Average annual volunteer hours[1] | Median annual volunteer hours[1] |
| | percentage | hours | | percentage | hours | |
| **Immigrant status** | | | | | | |
| Canadian-born † | 49 | 155 | 52 | 49 | 163 | 55 |
| Immigrants | 39* | 162 | 60 * | 40* | 170* | 67* |
| **Time immigrants spent in Canada** | | | | | | |
| Less than 10 years | 39* | 167[1] | 60 * | 37* | 136* | 48* |
| 10 to 19 years | 36* | 133 | 44 * | 42 | 150 | 70* |
| 20 to 29 years | 37* | 118 | 48 * | 38* | 187* | 71* |
| 30 years or more | 42* | 193 | 80 * | 42* | 203* | 85* |

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$) from the reference group

1. Estimates of average and median annual volunteer hours are calculated for volunteers only.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007 and 2010.

**Table 5 Volunteer rate and average annual number of hours volunteered, by immigrant status and personal and economic characteristics, population aged 15 and over, 2010**

| | Distribution of population aged 15 and over | | Volunteer rate | | Average annual volunteer hours[1] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Canadian-born † | Immigrants | Canadian-born † | Immigrants | Canadian-born † | Immigrants |
| | percentage | | | | hours | |
| **Personal and economic characteristics** | | | | | | |
| **Total** | **100** | **100** | **49** | **39*** | **155** | **162** |
| **Age group** | | | | | | |
| 15 to 24 years | 17 | 12* | 60 | 43* | 115 | 261E |
| 25 to 34 years | 17 | 17 | 48 | 38 | 113 | 110E |
| 35 to 64 years | 51 | 53 | 49 | 40* | 170 | 130* |
| 65 years and over | 15 | 18* | 38 | 34 | 218 | 244 |
| **Language spoken most often at home** | | | | | | |
| English and/or French | 99 | 56* | 49 | 45* | 155 | 155 |
| Other language | 1 | 44* | 51 | 31* | 128E | 175E |
| **Household income** | | | | | | |
| Under $40,000 | 25 | 26 | 35 | 33 | 169 | 238E |
| $40,000 to $99,999 | 43 | 47 | 51 | 38* | 155 | 158 |
| $100,000 and over | 31 | 27* | 60 | 46* | 147 | 115 |
| **Religion** | | | | | | |
| No religion | 26 | 21* | 49 | 35* | 132 | 153 |
| Does not attend religious services | 29 | 22* | 37 | 28* | 145 | 97* |
| Infrequent attendance[2] | 32 | 29 | 53 | 38* | 145 | 173E |
| Weekly attendance | 14 | 28* | 71 | 51* | 208 | 186 |
| **Education** | | | | | | |
| No university degree | 79 | 61* | 45 | 39* | 149 | 177 |
| University degree | 21 | 39* | 65 | 44* | 167 | 144 |
| **Marital status** | | | | | | |
| Not in a couple | 37 | 33* | 49 | 40* | 133 | 206E* |
| Married or common-law | 63 | 67* | 50 | 39* | 167 | 141* |
| **Presence of children in household** | | | | | | |
| No children under age 18 | 63 | 56* | 43 | 38* | 176 | 189 |
| Children under age 18 | 37 | 44* | 61 | 40* | 134 | 133E |
| **Labour force status** | | | | | | |
| Unemployed or not in the labour force | 33 | 35 | 46 | 39* | 175 | 222 |
| Employed | 67 | 65 | 53 | 40* | 143 | 125 |

† reference group

* statistically significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$) from the reference group

1. Estimates of average annual volunteer hours are calculated for volunteers only.
2. Includes the following responses: "attends at least once or twice a year", "at least 3 or 4 times a year" or "at least once a month".

Note: Due to rounding, totals may not add up to 100% .

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

Immigrants living in households with higher incomes were less likely to volunteer than their Canadian-born counterparts. However immigrants with household incomes under $40,000 volunteered just as often as lower income people born in Canada (Table 5).

Relative to the Canadian-born population, a far larger proportion of immigrants—and especially recent immigrants—speaks a non-official language at home (respectively 44% of immigrants compared with 1% of the Canadian-born, Table 2). Among immigrants who spoke a language other than English or French at home, 31% had volunteered in the 12 months leading up to the survey. Among those who spoke English or French at home, 45% had volunteered (Table 5).

Religious attendance is connected to volunteering just as it is to financial donations: people who attend a religious service each week are more likely to volunteer. Immigrants were more likely than the Canadian-born to attend a religious service weekly, and those immigrants who did attend were more likely to volunteer than those who did not. Among all weekly religious attendees though, immigrants were less likely to volunteer than the Canadian-born. As for the number of volunteer hours, immigrants and the Canadian-born who attended religious services weekly were spending the same amount of time (Table 5).

### Immigrant volunteers slightly more likely to give their time to religious organizations

While there is a general similarity between the organizations most often supported by immigrant volunteers and those popular with the Canadian-born, there are also some differences. Immigrants were more likely to volunteer their time to a religious organization (11% versus 9%) (Chart 6). They also contributed a larger proportion of their volunteer time to religious organizations. In fact, one-fifth (20%) of the total volunteer hours contributed by immigrant volunteers went to religious organizations. In comparison, volunteers born in Canada gave about 14% of their total volunteer hours to religious organizations (Chart 7).

The fact that immigrants give a larger share of their volunteer hours to religious organizations may not be simply related to religious norms or behaviours they bring from their country of origin. Churches, temples and mosques may function as social centres for immigrants and allow them to connect with people from their own cultural background. Religious giving and volunteering may promote this type of bonding, while volunteering for non-religious causes may reflect stronger links to the wider Canadian community.[14]

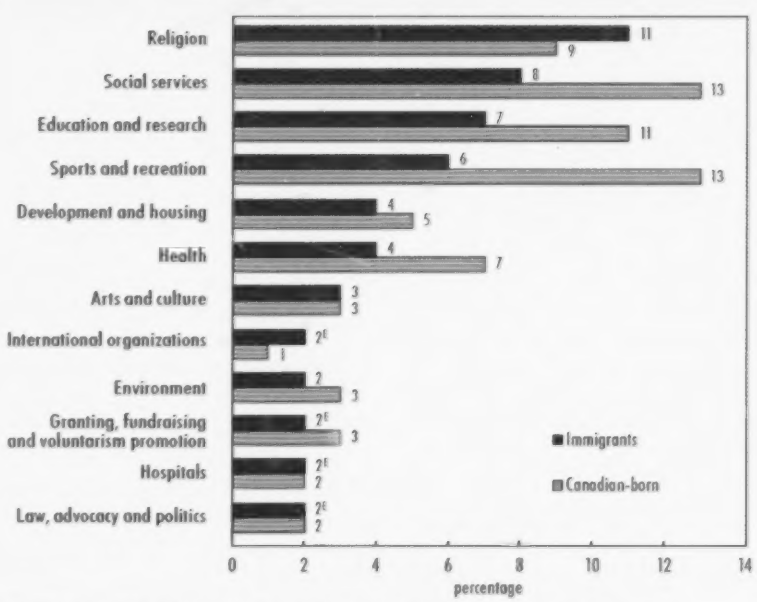
Canadian-born volunteers contributed relatively more time than immigrant volunteers to sports and recreation groups (22% of their total hours versus 11% for immigrants) and to social services organizations (19% versus 11%). While immigrants were about as likely as people born in Canada to volunteer with arts and culture organizations, they gave a larger share of their total hours to these organizations (12% versus 4%). Immigrants were more likely, though, than other Canadians to volunteer for international causes and contributed a larger share of their volunteer time to them (Charts 6 and 7).

### Recent immigrants as likely to volunteer as long-term immigrants

In 2010, recent immigrants were almost as likely to volunteer as were long-term ones. Also, among immigrants who volunteered, those in Canada for less than 10 years gave about as many hours on average as those who had been established for 30 years or more (Table 4).

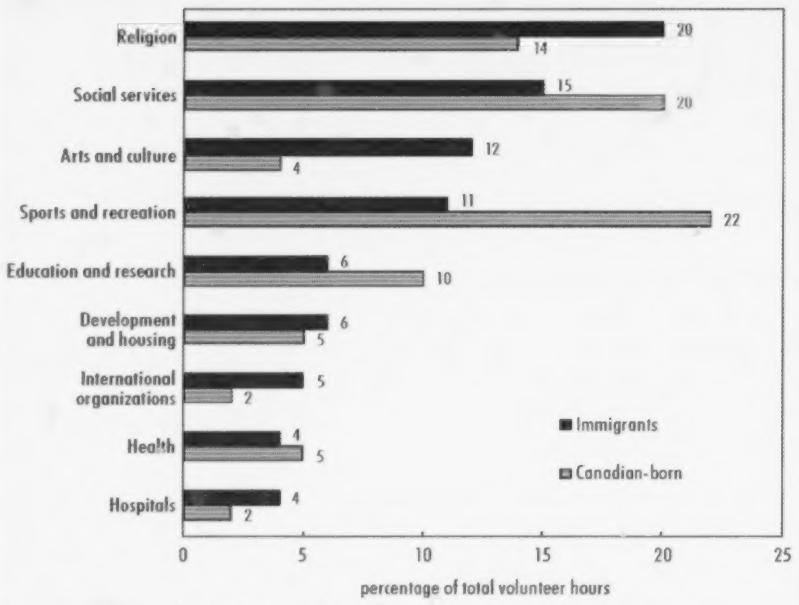
Among immigrant volunteers who gave their time to religious organizations, there was no real

**Chart 6 Volunteer rate for different types of organizations, by immigrant status, population aged 15 and over, 2010**



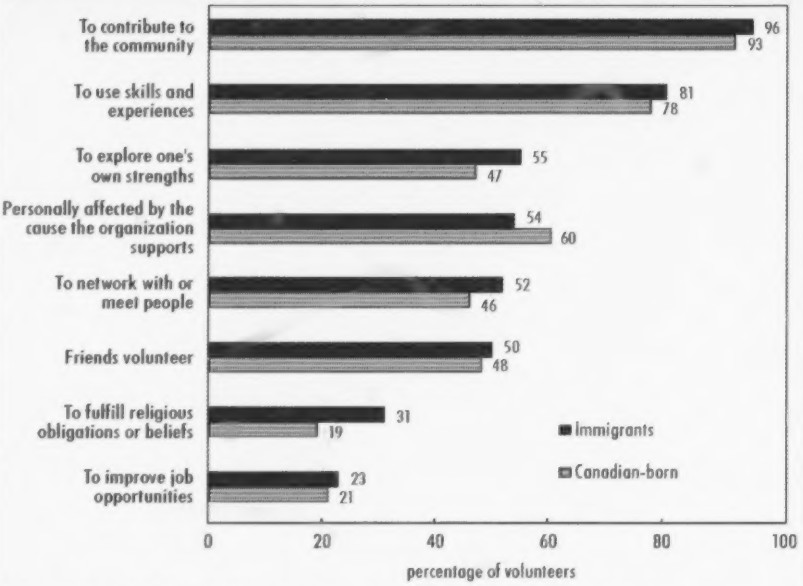

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

**Chart 7 Percentage of total volunteer hours given to different types of organizations, by immigrant status, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010**




Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

**Chart 8 Reasons for volunteering,[1] by immigrant status, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010**




1. Reasons for volunteering with the organization to which the volunteer gave the most hours (main organization).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

difference based on length of time in Canada. About 30% of long-term immigrants volunteered with religious organizations compared with about 29% of those who had been in Canada for less than 10 years.

There was evidence, however, that long-term immigrant volunteers more often contributed to other, non-religious, types of organizations. For example, they were more likely than other immigrant volunteers to have volunteered with sports and recreation organizations (22% versus 11%), as well as with environmental causes (8% versus 4%). The pattern is reminiscent of the one observed with respect to donations (data not shown).

### Immigrants volunteer for similar reasons and do similar tasks as the Canadian-born

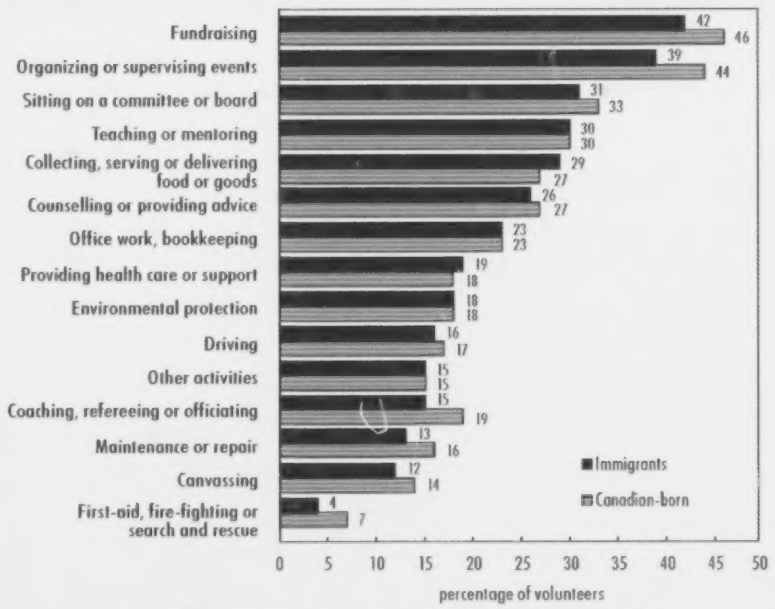
The top reasons for volunteering given by both immigrants and the Canadian-born were to make a contribution to their community and to use their skills. Immigrant volunteers were less likely to have said they had volunteered because they or someone they knew was affected by the issue or cause. They were more likely to have been motivated by religious reasons than Canadian-born volunteers (31% versus 19%) (Chart 8).

The main volunteer tasks performed by immigrants were very like those performed by Canadian-born volunteers. Fundraising, organizing or supervising, sitting on a committee, and teaching or mentoring were most often mentioned. However, immigrant volunteers were not as likely as those born in Canada to work as organizers and supervisors, as fundraisers, or as coaches and referees (Chart 9).

### Immigrants are slightly more likely to give lack of time as a reason for not volunteering

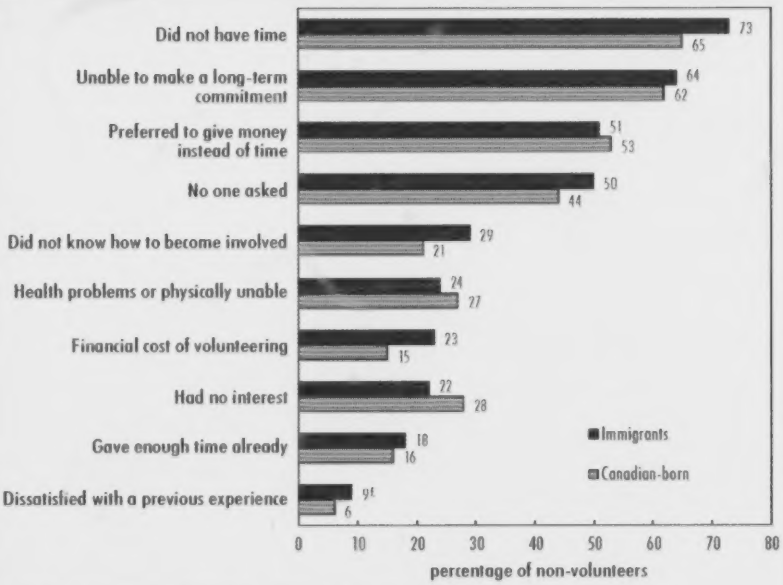
People who had not volunteered during the previous year were asked about why they did not. The most frequently mentioned reasons, among

## Chart 9 Participation rate in different types of volunteer activities, by immigrant status, volunteers aged 15 and over, 2010




Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

## Chart 10 Reasons for not volunteering, by immigrant status, non-volunteers aged 15 and over,[1] 2010




1. Includes people who had not volunteered in the 12 months preceding the survey but who may have volunteered before that period.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2010.

both immigrants and the Canadian-born, were time constraints and the inability to make a long-term commitment. Immigrants were slightly more likely than other Canadians to say they did not have enough time. They were more likely to say that no one had asked them to volunteer or that they did not know how to get involved; or to mention the financial cost associated with volunteer work and their dissatisfaction with a previous experience. Immigrants were less likely, however, to say they were not interested in volunteering (Chart 10).

The great majority of people in Canada provide informal, direct help to family, friends and neighbours without the mediation of a non-profit organization or registered charity. About 85% of Canadian-born respondents indicated they had helped someone with things like housework, home maintenance, driving or babysitting without going through an organization. Immigrants were a bit less likely to report providing informal help (78%).

### Summary

In 2010, immigrants were about as likely to donate money to charities and non-profit organizations as were the Canadian-born but they tended to donate larger amounts. While immigrants were less likely to volunteer their time to such organizations, those who did volunteer contributed as many hours as Canadian-born volunteers.

Immigrants differ somewhat in their charitable behaviour according to how long they have been in Canada. Additionally, differences in charitable behaviour observed between immigrants as a whole and the Canadian-born can be explained once the variations in their age, income, language used at home and religious attendance are taken into account.

Like young people born in Canada, recent immigrants are at a particular life stage: they are settling in, acquiring housing and raising

children. They also face constraints in the form of lower employment rates and household incomes. They have less money to give, but nonetheless donate a proportion of their incomes similar to that of long-term immigrants. They also volunteer their time at comparable rates.

Apart from their different age profile and financial situation, many new immigrants have different traditions around giving and volunteering. They also may be drawn toward institutions where other members of their ethnic group associate. Most notably, they are more likely than the Canadian-born to have a religious affiliation and to attend regular religious meetings and services, which influences their charitable behaviour.

Immigrants who have been in Canada for a longer time continue to donate to religious causes; they give more as their household income—and presumably their wealth—increases. However, while they continue to support religious organizations, it appears that long-term immigrants give to a broader array of charities than recent immigrants.

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